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ABSTRACT

This coordinator's report and training manual are materials from a teacher training project for teachers of English to adult speakers of other languages in state-funded adult education programs in central New Jersey. The 14-page report is a personal narrative with no supporting documentation. It covers objectives, the project's educational (workshop and practicum) and evaluation (continuous self-evaluation and project evaluation) components, survey of participants to determine training workshop content, description of workshop and practicum, learning mediums used during the projects, problems, and participant comments. The training manual contains topics which project participants felt would be beneficial to teachers they would be serving as resources in upcoming training efforts. Topics are classified according to their appropriateness for preservice education, inservice education, or enrichment training for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. Implications for training are provided for each topic. Suggestions for preservice training include principles of teaching adults; content, procedure, and expectations; lesson planning; the four skill areas; and grammar. Under inservice training, these topics are offered: group work, issues in error correction, and introduction to the structure of English Current ESL methodologies and their psychological bases and functions and notions are suggested as enrichment training topics. (YLB)

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Training Project for Teachers of Adult ESL Students

JAMES LYDON
August 1981

the trenton state college adult education resource center

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TRAINING PROJECT FOR TEACHERS OF ADULT ESL STUDENTS

PART I Introduction and Acknowledgements
Coordinator's Report

PART II Training Manual

James Lydon, Project Coordinator
August, 1981

Trenton State College, Hillwood Lakes
P.O. Box 940, Trenton, NJ 08625

This project was developed and implemented pursuant to grants made available through the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of School Programs, Bureau of Adult, Continuing, Community Education, under Section 310 of the Adult Education Act, P.L. 93-380 as amended.

Barry F. Semple, Director
Bureau of Adult, Continuing, Community Education

Bruno Ciccariello, Director
Office of Adult Basic Education

PART I

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the 1979-80 academic year, the Adult Education Resource Center at Trenton State College conceived the idea for a 310 proposal to provide a teacher training project for teachers of English to adult speakers of other languages in the state-funded adult education programs in central New Jersey. In the spring of 1980 the proposal was approved and in the early summer of 1980, a coordinator was hired to implement the project under the supervision of the Adult Education Resource Center (AERC) staff. I was that coordinator.

In the following pages, written at the project's conclusion, I attempt to reflect back on the experience, in an attempt to focus on what we did and how and why we did it. Because this is a personal statement, I have written it in the first person. However, in reading the narrative, one is apt to conclude that I orchestrated the project singlehandedly. I would like to dispel any such erroneous notion at the start. While I was largely responsible for what we did (including any of the mistakes that we made), I could never have done anything without the help and support of a lot of people whom I would like to take the opportunity to thank here and now.

No one was more responsible for the success of this project than Mary Dolan, until recently, the Assistant Director of the Adult Education Resource Center at Trenton State College. It was she who conceived the idea of the project, designed it, got it off the ground and guided me throughout its implementation, mostly gently, but also at times when I needed it, firmly. It was because she saw the need for such a project and responded to that need that it became a reality.

Harry Van Houten, the Director of the Resource Center is another whose quiet but sure guidance and constant attention to detail, budgetary and otherwise, helped me in innumerable ways (and out of innumerable jams) throughout the course of the project. His implicit faith and confidence in what we were doing helped to make my task quite a pleasant one.

Karen Bruns served the project in an outstanding fashion as project secretary. She learned quickly how to deal with my, at times, erratic behavior, and in spite of that behavior, managed to have everything in the right place at the right time all the time. Her happy manner and her efficient attention to the most minute details resulted in the wheels of the project always turning smoothly and surely.

Terry Pesce is the Resource Center secretary. Her kind and gentle approach to people was evident from the day I met her. I am particularly grateful for her willingness to listen whenever I found myself thinking out loud!

These are the individuals who played such an important role in ensuring the success of the project. But there are three groups of people who also deserve recognition here. First is the Trenton State College administration for its generous support and constant assistance without which the project would never have worked. I particularly acknowledge Dr. Ray Wheeler of the Office of Funding and Grants and Dr. Phil Olio, Dean of the School of Education. In addition, my thanks go out to all of the departments of the college which were so helpful in our day to day management of the project.

I also acknowledge the nineteen different individuals who came to Trenton at various times during the year to present workshops and/or to work with the participants in the practicum. To this group, we owe a

profound dept of gratitude for their professional dedication and their willingness to share their expertise.

Last but not least I would like to recognize the Bureau of Adult, Community, Continuing Education of the New Jersey State Department of Education without whom this project would never have seen the light of day for it was they who approved the concept and provided the funding to proceed.

On behalf of all of the participants of the project (and their students), I gratefully acknowledge all of these people and extend to them our heartfelt thanks.

Jim Lydon
Project Coordinator
August 14, 1981

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

The training manual which accompanies this narrative[1] represents the sum total of our 310 project experience. It is external in that it is the tangible distallation of experiences which the project participants found the most beneficial of the project and which they felt they would want to share in their own future training of others. However, the project was more than the manual which emerged from it, and it is to these less tangible aspects that I want to address this report.

The Adult Education Resource Center at Trenton State College exists as an arm of the State Department of Adult, Community and Continuing Education and is charged with the responsibility of providing resources, including teacher training and professional development to some forty seven (47) State-funded adult education programs in a six (6) county area in central New Jersey. However, the continuous turnover of part-time adult education staff and the scarcity of ESL trained or certified teachers in these programs have hampered the efforts of the Adult Education Resource Center (AERC) staff to upgrade the quality of teaching in these programs, particularly in the ESL programs. It was in response to this training need that the AERC proposed an intensive training project for teachers of ESL to adult students, a project which would provide an effective alternate method of training for the purpose of significantly increasing the number of skilled ESL adult educators in central New Jersey and thereby improving the quality of ESL instruction in its adult education programs. It was

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[1]This is the Coordinator's personal narrative and, as such, contains no supporting documentation of any kind. Readers who desire such information, may address their request to: Adult Education Resource Center, Trenton State College, LN 200, CN 550-Pennington Road, Trenton, NJ 08625.

felt that in achieving these goals, the AERC staff could, in turn, rely on those so trained to serve in the future as resources in the training of others thus enhancing its own training capabilities.

These, briefly, were our goals, and while it will, obviously, be some time before we know whether they have been met, this narrative will serve as a means to reflect back on the experience to see what we did, how we did it, and what, at this point at least, seemed to work and what did not.

Over an eight (8) month period from September, 1980 to May, 1981, eighteen (18) teachers of ESL to adults, responding to a need to take a closer look at what they were doing in the ESL classroom, voluntarily participated in the project.[2] Teachers were selected for participation in the project by the AERC upon the recommendation of their program directors and provided that they possessed a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Project participation implied a two-semester commitment to the project as well as a commitment to avail themselves in the coming year (1981-82) to local and possibly regional training.

We met almost weekly on Friday nights and/or Saturday mornings (and, occassionally, on Saturday afternoons) both here at Trenton State College for workshops and, in practicum, at local program sites, to discuss, share experiences and learn more about the teaching of ESL to adult learners. In all, the participants were involved in one hundred and three (103) hours of training.

In form, the project was a unified blend of two components, an educational component (workshops and practicum) and an evaluation component (both continuous self-evaluation and project evaluation). These together formed the total project experience which was accredited by Trenton State

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[2]Twenty one (21) participants began the project in September. One, having received a teaching assignment withdrew from the project in October. Two others withdrew from the project at the end of the first half: one citing conflict with work schedule and another severe transportation problems.

as a graduate course in ESL methodology and for which participants who successfully completed the project were awarded six (6) cost-free graduate credits which may be applied toward New Jersey State certification in ESL.

My involvement in the project began in August, 1980. At that time I sent a letter to those who had been accepted into the project, expressing what the general tone of the project would be. I wrote:

> We hope during that (the project) time to establish ourselves as a community of learners in which we can, together, establish a nucleus of informed ESL teachers (teachers who are asking the right questions) for the purpose of improving not only what we do as ESL teachers but also our programs and, as future trainers, the programs of others as well.
>
> The ultimate goal of the project is to provide you with a diversity of experiences, each designed to help you arrive at a clear theoretical base against which you can measure what you do as an ESL teacher. It is hoped that once such a base has been defined, much of your task will begin to take on a lot more meaning.

As a teacher of English to speakers of other languages, I am not so concerned with teaching the language to students as I am in helping them to develop within themselves the strategies necessary to work with the language on their own. For me, the classroom is not a place where students learn language, at least not primarily. Rather, it is a laboratory where they can control it for a while, slow it down, take a closer look at it, hypothesize about it, test their hypothesis, draw conclusions--all for the purpose of better understanding it so that they can deal with it more efficiently and effectively outside the classroom. For me, then, the goal of classroom instruction is not to produce fluent speakers. Rather, the classroom exists, perhaps paradoxically, to free students as soon as possible from the need to come to class, for once they have developed the criteria necessary for dealing with the language on their own, then the world may become their classroom.

As project coordinator, my goal was the same. I attempted to organize a project which would provide the participants with a wealth of experiences from which they could draw, to analyze, process, accept or reject as they worked at developing their own personal criteria for identifying what it is that constitutes effective teaching/learning interaction--criteria which they could then use to become increasingly dependent upon themselves for the answers to the many challenging questions they had regarding the teaching of English to adult speakers of other languages. Fortunately, I was working within the framework of a project design which was emminently suited to this kind of approach.

We seem to have digressed; back to the letter. Along with the letter I also sent a questionnaire to the participants. The questionnaire was keyed to the project objectives as outlined in the proposal, and it listed some twenty four (24) topics relevant to the teaching of ESL to adults. In one section, the participants were asked to rate themselves as to their perceived knowledge in each area, and in a second, they were asked to rate these same areas again in terms of the priority each should be given in the training portion of the project.

The tabulation of the responses to the questionnaires served to form the basis for a schedule of workshops. Consultants were then contracted to provide the educational component of the project, and for each of the fourteen (14) topics covered during the course of the project, a different consultant was employed, one noted for his or her expertise in the area of topic being discussed, and one who had demonstrated successful experience in leading workshops in the past. These fourteen consultants (along with an additional six (6) master teachers who handled the practicum) formed the "faculty" for the educational component of the project.

I tried as much as possible to remain faithful to that aspect of the project which specified that the participants would be actively involved in the creation of the project experience. This was the rationale for the questionnaire and, in addition, I requested input from the participants regularly.

Workshops for the first half of the project began in September and ran through December. The workshops during this time, at least the early ones, were addressed to topics of a more theoretical nature, dwelling as they did on the affective and cultural variables affecting second language acquisition, as well as on basic linguistic theory and second language acquisition research. In addition to these workshops, three (3) ninety minute sessions were devoted to the process/product journal (about which more will be discussed shortly). The first semester's workshops ended with a twelve (12) hour introductory workshop on the Silent Way, a widely recognized ESL methodology.

Workshops during the second half of the project continued the examination of ESL instruction at the level of method and technique. In addition to a ten (10) hour introduction to Counseling Learning/Community Language Learning (another major ESL methodology), participants examined such areas as curriculum and lesson design, small group management in multi-level classes, reading and writing, and the development of listening acuity skills for the ESL learner.[3] In addition to these more practical workshops, there was a session devoted to helping participants develop criteria for objectively assessing what they do in the classroom. In addition to these workshops, the practicum began.

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[3]Except for the methodology workshops, and a six (6) hour workshop on curriculum and lesson design, all workshops were three(3) hour sessions.

The practicum involved subdividing the group of eighteen (18) participants into six (6) small groups, each assigned to a master teacher. The individual practica were held at four (4) local program sites and involved a total of eighteen (18) hours of which twelve (12) were spent in actual teaching and peer observation. (The remaining six (6) hours were devoted to whole group sessions with the master teachers on campus at Trenton State.)

Essentially, the practicum was designed to provide each participant with an opportunity to teach while being observed by the other members of his/her group as well as by the master teacher. Each teaching experience was followed by a discussion facilitated by the master teacher of what had just been observed. While the primary goal of the practicum was to give participants an opportunity to test the theory and practice they had been exposed to in workshops, another equally important goal was to help them to develop criteria for looking at what they do in the classroom in ways they had not before. Receiving input not only from a master teacher but also from their peers was seen as extremely beneficial since it was hoped that such collegial support would continue long after the project ended.

Up to now, I have been describing the educational component of the project. However, as I mentioned earlier, the project consisted of two components, the second being the evaluation component. I say second in terms of this narrative; however, it was central to the project and was designed and built into the project for the purpose of providing participants with a means of keeping an ongoing record of their experiences in the project itself and the effect that the project was having on their teaching, specifically, and generally on themselves as learners.

The journal was a private and personal endeavor; however, it was from these personal records, and reflections on them, that the participants were

to be able to gauge the overall effectiveness of the project. These shared reflections would serve as the basis of our two group evaluation sessions held in December, 1980, and April, 1981. Finally, the journal was to serve the participants as the primary resource for the identification of those project experiences which they felt were the ones which had had the greatest impact on them and which they felt should be included in the training manual, a tool to be used by them in their future training efforts.

As I mentioned earlier, the participants were introduced to the journal process during the first semester in a series of three ninety minute workshop sessions designed to teach them the rationale for journal keeping, the framework for doing so, and to clarify the process as they began to work with it. At the end of the first half of the project, the participants evaluated the journal process itself, and as a result of this discussion, the process was modified to meet their needs.

In addition to self evaluation and project evaluation, the academic requirements of the college also needed to be satisfied. Toward the end of each semester, I assigned a set of take-home essay questions. These were open ended, cumulative type questions and were culled from the various workshops, all of which I had attended. I graded the essays, and along with several other criteria (overall participation in the project-related activities, attendance at workshops, faithfullness to journal keeping, completion of outside readings, etc.), for which the participants assigned themselves grades, we arrived at a final grade which became the grade for each semester which was submitted to the college.

Finally, other project requirements included the preparation and development by the participants of a workshop in May for supervisory personnel (program directors, supervisors, state and college officials, etc.), the

formulation of the training manual and finally, at the end of the project, a personal essay, one in which the participants were asked to reflect back over the entire experience in an attempt to determine not so much what they had learned but rather what experiences and/or situations in the project helped (or hindered) their learning.

* * * * * *

This, then, is what we did in an attempt at achieving our previously mentioned goals of providing an alternate method of training for the purpose of increasing the number of skilled ESL personnel in the resource area and, consequently, the quality of instruction in the State-funded programs. We seem certainly to have met our first goal; the project was, unquestionably an alternative to any other teacher training project attempted in the State of which I am aware, not only in terms of its scope, but also in terms of its implementation and means of assessment.

The project was implemented in such a way that it would be a meaningful experience for all involved. The participants brought to the project a wide diversity of backgrounds in the teaching of English to the foreign born adult. Some had been teaching ESL to adults for many years; others had had little or no such experience. Some had been involved in prior ESL training either in AERC-sponsored workshops or even college level classroom instruction; others had not. For some, teaching ESL to adults was a major form of employment; for others it was only a part time activity. The project needed to respond to this diversity, and it did by employing a rich variety of learning mediums so that participants could focus more or less intensively on areas of theory or practice which were particularly meaningful to them given their current stage of development and their individual needs.

These mediums, of course, included the workshops, and within these was the breadth and range of expertise of the presenters who conducted them. Rarely, if ever, is one so exposed in so short and concentrated a time to such a wide and diverse source of expertise. All of the workshop leaders were different; all had different approaches to teaching and learning, and all were (or had been) themselves teachers of ESL to adults. And while most workshops lasted only three hours, there almost always seemed to grow a bond between participants and workshop leaders often resulting in consultants inviting participants to maintain communication and to come and observe classes--the sort of professional comrade that one usually doesn't experience except at conferences, though here, people were not flying off to remote corners of the country; these experts, are in fact, right in the participants' backyard. Many of the participants recognized this as being an unexpected side benefit of the project. Seeing that they were, indeed, part of a much larger and very professional community, they indicated that their sense of isolation had been greatly diminished. "I no longer feel that I am working in my own personal vineyard," said one. Another mentioned that she now felt part of the "ESL elite."

Other learning mediums included abundant readings and the practicum. The directors' workshop and the final essay questions as well as the practicum challenged the participants to synthesize and articulate and visibly demonstrate their learning. Perhaps the single most important learning medium of all was the journal. The journal, more than anything else served those who used it faighfully as a means of maintaining an ongoing account of experiences, and over the long term, a tangible record of growth and change in both attitude and actual practice.

Looking back over the project as a whole, I am gratified and proud of what we did. Judging from the general tenor of participants' reactions and my own perceptions of what happened, the project seems to have been an overwhelming success. The majority of participants indicated in a final evaluation session that the project had met, and in many cases, exceeded their expectations.

Yet the project was not without its problems, and now from the vantage point of one who has gone through it and who enjoys the luxury which retrospection affords, I see a few areas that I would pay more careful attention to in planning if I had it to do again.

The first area is the process/product journal, for it was this area which received the most mixed reaction from the largest number of participants. The journal was designed to be central to the project, the primary source of personal and group assessment. However, the participants' reactions indicate that there was a good deal of confusion as to the concept of journal keeping and its rationale in spite of the sessions in the early part of the project which aimed at helping them in this regard. The result was that for many, the journal was seen as more peripheral than central and it seems clear that not everyone in fact kept up with the process of journal keeping. While there were those who did indicate that the journal was an extremely valuable means for their own self assessment and for gaining deeper insights into themselves as teachers and learners as a result of the project experience the conclusion that I draw is that the journal did not serve the <u>full</u> purpose for which it was intended (group as well as personal assessment). It seems clear that more time should have been spent early on and throughout the entire project in helping the participants better understand and carry out the journal process.

The second major area of the project that I am not completely satisfied with was the practicum. What we did was good. The master teachers were among the best available anywhere, and I had absolute confidence in them. By and large, the participants agreed that the practicum was the single most valuable aspect of the project. As I said, what we did was good. I think we should have done more of it. At the end of the practicum in a meeting with the master teachers, they (the master teachers) all agreed that the time for the practicum was too short, that it seemed that just as they were getting to know the participants with whom they had been working, the experience was over, and that they really hadn't the time to achieve the goals which they and the participants had mapped out at an orientation meeting held at the start of the practicum.

I believe that there were actually two problems with the practicum. The first was that it was too short; it perhaps should have been extended and in fact run through most of the project and not just the latter part of the second semester. Another was that the master teachers, and the practicum itself, were an extension of the project and not an integral part of it. As it was, only one of the master teachers had conducted a workshop, and none knew any of the participants before their first meeting in practicum. It would probably have been advantageous to have had the master teachers play an integral role in the project's development, either conducting workshops or leading occasional discussion seminars at various times throughout the project thus giving them a much more personal involvement in the project itself and a clearer understanding of the needs of the participants. Seminars such as these might also have responded to the needs of those participants who indicated that they had felt a need

to stop from time to time and to clarify with other participants ideas which had been presented in workshops which they hadn't fully been able to process.

Finally, there were some problems in the selection of workshops themselves. These problems resulted from my sometimes making assumptions about the participants' needs and backgrounds which were not always accurate despite my best efforts at trying to identify and respond to these needs. The result was that in some cases workshops were presented which overwhelmed participants, and because of lack of time we were not able to extend these workshops or continue them at a later date in order to do justice to the topics being examined. Consequently, some participants left these workshops with only an incomplete understanding, confused, and in a few cases, angered that their investment in time had not been a profitable one.

In this respect, the project was not as flexible as it might have been. In trying to remain faithful to the rather ambitious set of instructional objectives as outlined in the project proposal, our workshop schedules for the two semesters were quite full, and because the workshop consultants had to be contracted well in advance of their workshops both in order to insure their availability and also to give them adequate time to prepare their presentations, the schedule of workshops were pretty much set even before the semesters began. As a result, by the time I detected a problem like the one cited above, it was usually too late to do anything about it since the solution would have been the abrupt cancellation of a scheduled workshop (with all of the attendant problems that that would have entailed). Since "overloaded workshops"

seemed to occur only two or three times, they did not affect the project adversely; however, more careful planning and a greater sensitivity on my part to the needs and abilities of the participants, would have helped to avoid these situations.

I mentioned earlier that participants were requested to write an end-of-project personal essay for the purpose of trying to identify not what they learned, but rather how they learned, that is, which aspects of the project enhanced their learning and which hindered them.

Needless to say, the responses to these were as diverse as the individuals writing them. However, there did seem to be a pattern throughout which I would like to share.

Most mentioned that they learn best by doing. They cited the workshops in which they were actively involved, the practicum and in many cases simply the time to "be" with new concepts--working these out in their classrooms.

Many also cited the informal and communal aspect of the group and the absence of any semblance of competition as being particularly helpful in allowing them to proceed at a pace suitable to their own learning style.

Many found the wide variety of presenters particularly stimulating. They indicated that never knowing quite what to expect next in terms of a presenters' personality or approach added an exciting and challenging aspect to the project.

Finally, those who found it useful cited the journal was a particularly valuable aid to learning. Some indicated surprise when, going back and reviewing journal entries, they realized how they could actually see the change that had taken place in their attitudes as well as in actual teaching practice.

One participant wrote:

> When we were introduced to this phase of the project, I honestly thought this to be just a busy work assign-

> ment and would have no meaningful bearing on this project. I discovered some of my colleagues felt the same way as I did about it or even had stronger objections about it.
>
> None the less, I persevered. It was not easy to reflect and write down mental notes about my concerns about teaching my classes, especially when I felt so negative about it. I couldn't see much value to anything that I was writing--but as we moved deeper into the project and I began learning from the lectures and workshops, I discovered my jottings in the log started to have some meaningful comments at least in my own mind. I started to become more positive in what I was writing and doing because of the interactions I was having with my students and others.

On the minus side, some participants mentioned problems with having theory and practice separated. They felt that these should have been much more carefully integrated in the project design.

One or two participants commented on the variety aspect of the project as having a negative impact on their learning, and while this is not a pattern reflected in overall responses it is probably worth mentioning and it bears some reflection. They mentioned that the project, because of its diversity, seemed somewhat disjointed without connection and unity.

These then are some of the more prevalent notions expressed by the participants, and I include them here because they are valid and because they may serve to guide others who, at some time in the future, may wish to replicate what we have done.

The project is ended, and it remains now for the participants to continue to process this past year's experiences and to continue as well to attempt to translate them into effective classroom practice.

The task remains for the Resource Center to serve as a liason to the participants and to encourage and to mediate in the coming year a continuing dialogue among them in which they can continue to share and exchange insights they have developed as a result of the project. Many of these insights are outlined in the training manual on the following pages.

TRAINING MANUAL CONTENTS

SECTION I: SUGGESTIONS FOR PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

1. Some Principles of Teaching Adults 1
2. Content, Procedure, and Expectations . . . 4
3. Lesson Planning 7
4. The Four Skill Areas 9
5. What About Grammar? 13

SECTION II: SUGGESTIONS FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING

1. Group Work 15
2. Issues In Error Correction 17
3. Introduction to the Structure of English . 19

SECTION III: SUGGESTIONS FOR ENRICHMENT TRAINING

1. Current ESL Methodologies and their Psychological Bases 22
2. Functions and Notions 26

PART II

TRAINING MANUAL

Toward the end of the second semester, the participants were asked to review the project via their journal and to try to identify those experiences that seemed most valuable to them in the main, and which they considered were the ones they felt would most benefit those teachers for whom they would be serving as resources in their upcoming training efforts. We discussed these experiences and arrived at a general concensus of topics to be included in the manual. The participants then outlined the specifics of these topics, and I fleshed them out in the form that you see here.

In addition to being asked which topics should be included, the participants were also asked which would be most appropriate for the pre-service training of teachers who had had no prior ESL experience or training; which would be suitable for the in-service training of teachers with some experience; and which should be used for enrichment purposes, for those teachers with a good deal of ESL teaching experience. The coding, of the topics in the manual, then, is as follows: Section I: Pre-service; Section II: In-Service; and Section III: Enrichment.

SECTION 1

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

1. SOME PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING ADULTS

A. Adults are Not Children

While this is physically obvious, pedagogically, we do not always treat adults differently. The adult learner differs from the child learner in many important ways, ways that impact most significantly on how we go about creating a classroom environment and how we as teachers interact without adult students in the learning process.

In terms of his adultness, the adult learner is an equal, a peer to the teacher. Adult learners are used to being treated as mature persons and resent having teachers (or anyone else for that matter) patronize or talk down to them.

IMPLICATION: The adult learner is to be treated as an equal and accorded the same respect and dignity we expect of ourselves. Teachers must be extremely sensitive to this reality, and must guard against any attempt to be patronizing or condescending. Understanding this and always being sensitive to it is, perhaps, the single most important skill a teacher of ESL to adults can develop.

B. Adult Learners of ESL Sometimes Act Like Children

Having moved suddenly from his native culture where he enjoyed all of the respect and dignity accorded adults in all societies, the adult learner of ESL in a new culture now finds that the functions which language so efficiently served in his native culture are now no longer available to him. He is now unable to use language to convey his ideas, wants, needs, desires, indeed, himself, to his peers in the target culture. To a very large extent, he feels reduced to the level of a child in the presence of members of the target group. This is a debilitating experience of the most profound significance, one which many adult language learners are never able to deal with and/or overcome.

IMPLICATION: There are many variables other than one's "academic" ability to learn language, that affect how successful one will be in learning a second language. These variables dwell in the realm of the "affect," and often have to do with the way the adult sees himself as a member or a potential member of the target culture. The ESL classroom may be one of the few places in the target culture where the adult learner feels at ease. The teacher must do everything in his power to help create an atmosphere of security, warmth and acceptance, a place where adults can work together in community, helping each other, supporting each other, not only in their language efforts, but also in their coming to grips with who they are as they slowly become more a part of their new culture.

C. The Adult Learner Brings a Wealth of Experience to the Classroom

These experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant, make up the person he is. In addition, the adult learner has immediate goals and life objectives, and he has come to the ESL classroom of his own volition because he believes that learning English will help him to achieve these goals. Thus for the adult learner, learning English is not an end, but rather a means to an end.

IMPLICATION: The teacher must be careful not to waste the learner's time. He should strive to make every class a meaningful, learning experience. The content of the lessons should in some way respond to the specific needs of the learners. Adults should feel that they are learning something useful as a result of the time they are investing in attending class. Teachers should keep in mind too, that among some of the adults more unpleasant experiences may be past educational experiences. Therefore, it is important that teachers spend time developing an atmosphere of trust and security--an atmosphere in which adults feel good about themselves and about their potential for success. Lessons, especially early ones, should be the type that assure success. Always, students should be given the opportunity to assess the lessons to tell what was useful about them and what was not.

D. Not all Adults Share the Same Motivation

Some adults will "catch on" and learn the language quite handily; others will seem to get stuck and stay at the same level for a long time, perhaps permanently. For some, motivation is much stronger than for others. For those who learn quickly, it may be that their motivation is such that they want to become as much a part of the new culture as possible: they want to be like Americans. For others, there may be a resistance toward the target culture, perhaps even an aversion--conscious or unconscious which inhibits or even prevents learning. It happens too that for some, learning, which seemed to be going well, appears to have stopped. It may be that for these students, other factors have entered into the picture, factors which are more important at the moment and require more attention--and energy--than the language.

IMPLICATION: As was mentioned in 'C' above, there are many affective and cultural factors which affect a student's ability to acquire a second language. "Language Shock" (the student's sudden realization that he cannot use language to accomplish what he could in his native culture) and "Culture Shock" (the anxiety resulting from the disorientation encountered upon entering a new culture) can cause stress, anxiety and fear often resulting in a powerful syndrome of rejection of the new culture and possibly even of himself and can divert energy and attention from the second language. Researchers have noted that a student's success in learning a second language is in direct proportion to his ability and willingness to acculturate. Many students are eventually successful; many are not. The point is that while the teacher should be sensitive to the fact that these processes may be at work in his students, and encourage activities

which help the students deal with some of these anxieties, he should not feel that lack of student progress is, necessarily, a result of poor teaching.

IMPLICATION: Activities should be devised which help the beginning teacher to become sensitive to the needs of the adult learner of ESL particularly to those affective and socio-cultural variables which have such a powerful impact on the process of second language acquisition in a second culture.

2. CONTENT, PROCEDURE, AND EXPECTATIONS

CONTENT (What Should I Teach?)

1. Teach the student not the language. By this we mean that it is not practical (in fact it is probably harmful) to devise a curriculum or to choose a book before first meeting the students and determining their language needs. It is harmful for at least three reasons:

   a. Teaching from a preestablished curriculum or book assumes that all students in the class come into the program at the same time and remain in the program for the same length of time. They don't.

   b. Teaching from a preestablished curriculum or a book assumes that all students have the time to go from the lowest levels of proficiency through to the highest levels of proficiency--a range that may take several years. Most don't.

   c. Teaching from a preestablished curriculum or a book assumes that students attend class regularly and therefore can progress together. They don't.

   The fact is, a majority of our students will drop out of the program before coming close to what we would characterize as an acceptable English language proficiency level. They drop out for a variety of reasons, some of which were discussed in section 1. (You may very well begin in September with 15 students and end in June with 15 students, but a majority of the 15 students in June will be different from those who started in September!) The point is that each class must be developed to respond to the language and life needs of the group at the time. The challenge for the teacher of ESL to adults is that he must keep his finger on the pulse of the group at all times, diagnose their needs, and work from there.

2. An alternative to having students focus on structures which become progressively more complex as the course goes on, is to have them focus on language which they need to understand and speak in their daily lives. What is the language they need? What do they need to be able to say and respond to in the world of work, for example or at the bureaucratic agencies with which they frequently interact? Or at places like the doctor's office, the hospital, the pharmacy, housing agencies, the airport. What questions are they frequently asked in these situations? What responses are appropriate and yet within their level of linguistic proficiency? In short, the content of the lessons should be the language of skills and functions and the lessons should provide opportunities for students to practice the 4 skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Out of such a lesson, the teacher can note particular problems with grammar that most of the students are having and work on these at a later date; similarly, pronunciation problems can be noted and worked on later.

PROCEDURE (How Should I Teach?)

Proceed in a manner consistent with the principles of the adult learner in Section 1. Early on, create a climate of warmth, understanding, acceptance and security so that the students feel a part of a non-threatening, non-judgmental community. Assess the students language and life needs. Find out from them, via discussion / questionnaire, what their language and life needs are. Get to know them, who they are, where they're from, what they do in this country, what they'd like to do, etc. Remember, English for them is a means, not an end. Help them to learn English to be able to accomplish their goals, not yours. If their goals don't include fluency, so be it. Work with them and their goals.

EXPECTATIONS (What Should My Students Know and When Should They Know It?)

For reasons already cited (Section 1) and for a host of others not cited because we're not really sure what they are, teachers should not expect great shakes from their ESL students. Remember, students are in a class only a very small part of their time (usually 4-6 hours out of a total of 168 hours in a week). What they do outside of class with the language, the degree of effort they make in attending to English on their own, will determine largely how well they do in becoming fluent in English. Language is not learned in the classroom--in fact the classroom is probably the least effective place for language learning to occur. At best, we can only help students to develop strategies which will assist them in using the environment outside of the classroom more efficiently to continue their quest for English. Thus, a teacher of ESL to adults must not feel that he has failed if, after eight or ten months of ESL instruction, his students are not speaking English like a native, or even if they don't seem to have made much progress at all! If students do nothing with the language outside of class, (many have jobs at which their native language is the predominant one; many socialize only with other members of their native language and for all intents and purposes use English in the classroom) their progress will be very slow indeed.

Perhaps the most successful teachers are those who make the classroom a stimulating place for adult learners of ESL to be. Such stimulation may be the catalyst they need to develop more positive feeling about English and about themselves in an English speaking environment, attitudes which may motivate them to more actively involve themselves in the life of the target culture thus exposing them to opportunities to develop proficiency in English.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

Beginning teachers should be taught that the CONTENT of lessons should focus on skills, competencies and functions—the language for which their students need to be able to understand, speak and respond to in their everyday lives. Their lessons should give students an opportunity to practice language to communicate meaningfully, though the language should be controlled so that it is within or just slightly beyond their level of linguistic proficiency.

Grammar lessons can and should be developed from time to time to respond to the common problem areas of the group, but such lessons should be peripheral—not central—to the goals of the curriculum.

Procedurally, trainees should be encouraged to create a classroom environment that is secure, accepting, non-judgmental and above all stimulating—students should feel they're in a place where their language and life needs are being met every time they come to class.

Finally, in terms of expectations, trainees should come to grips with the reality that language (like any learning) is acquired slowly over the long term. Unfortunately, students don't learn perfectly everything they are presented and practice. The fact is that no one really understands how anyone learns (acquires) anything. Like any skill (driving a car, swimming, playing a musical instrument) we acquire it with enough time, practice and desire, but once we have it we're not really sure exactly when or how it happened; we just know it did! Teachers who are seeking perfection at every step along the way will be frustrated. The best we can do is to provide opportunities for meaningful practice with the time we have. The students' motivation (goals/desires) is something we have little control over except that we can possibly influence their motivation by making their learning experiences relevant to their needs, their goals, and <u>their ability</u>.

3. LESSON PLANNING

Lessons can be seen as comprising four phases: Planning, Procedure, Wrap Up, and Evaluation.

I. PLANNING

A. To what need(s) of the students does the lesson respond? How was that need assessed? Why am I teaching this lesson and not something else? Is this the most important thing that my students need at this time?

B. If the answers to the above questions are "yes," then the next step is to state a goal: What should my students be able to do as a result of this lesson? How will this be demonstrated? What procedure will I use to determine that students have achieved the goal of the lesson? It is important that the objective be stated in terms of what the students should be able to do, not in terms of what the teacher hopes to accomplish.

C. The lesson should include activities that encompass the four skill areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

D. The lesson should be tested. What material(s) will be required--what AV equipment, relia, etc. If you have devised an activity or an assignment for the students to work on during class, do it yourself first. Be sure that all bases have been covered so that you can anticipate problems that might occur. Make sure materials are legible, relia is visible, and that AV equipment, if used, is operable.

E. Determine in advance what the students will be doing during the lesson. What will the role of the teacher be? Try to anticipate every 10-15 minute segment and define it in terms of who will be doing what and <u>why</u>.

F. Plan activities for the instructional phase of the lesson which are neither too short or too long. 15-20 minutes is usually a good amount of time. Vary the activitiy(ies) so that the four skill areas are employed.

II. PROCEDURE

A. <u>Introduction</u>. The introduction may serve as a review of previously taught material if the new lesson is to build on what has gone before. However, as much as possible, lessons should be self-contained so that students new to the class, or students who were not in attendance at the last class need not worry too much about not knowing what went before.

B. Implementation. This is the working phase of the lesson. It should be student dominated, not teacher dominated. It should comprise at least 85% of the class time and the ratio of teacher talk to student talk should be about 80% to 20%. (except, of course, during listening activities). It is during this stage that the students are actively engaged in the learning process, working with each other (with the teacher acting as facilitator) in practicing whatever it was that was set up in the introduction.

As much as possible, students should be working in groups (especially for oral skills lessons) and the teacher's instructions should be crystal. Instructions for group activities should be clear and given in more than one medium, that is, they should be written, spoken and demonstrated before the activity(ies) begins.

Homework: Homework should be given only as an option. Many adults won't do it (for any number of reasons), and they shouldn't be made to if they don't wish to. Further, they shouldn't have to go through the guilts for not having done it. Since homework is not usually done by everyone, it shouldn't be used as a basis for the next day's class.

III. WRAP UP

At this phase, give students an opportunity to assess what they thought of the lesson. Did they find it useful? Was it too easy? too difficult? Was it helpful? It takes a while for students to feel they can be free to offer their criticisms, but it's worth the time. The teacher can learn a lot about his lessons from the students.

IV. EVALUATION

Reflect back on the lesson. What was accomplished? How did the students react? How much were the students actively engaged? Were the directions to the activity(ies) clear? Did students lose time because they didn't know what to do? How much did students talk? How much did teacher talk? What did I learn about myself as a teacher as a result of this class?

4. THE FOUR SKILL AREAS

1. LISTENING - Many believe that listening is the primary skill to be developed in adult ESL instruction. If it is not the primary skill, it is at least as important as developing oral skills, and it is an area often overlooked in many adult ESL classroom settings.

   Listening activities are crucial in an adult ESL program if for no other reason than the adult spends far more time outside of the ESL classroom than he does in it, and therefore, has the opportunity to exposing himself to far more English outside. Listening activities which help the learner develop an "ear" for English will greatly enhance his ability of making sense of spoken English outside of class.

   IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

   For the lower level students, listening activities will include making sense of sounds (in minimal pairs), content words (nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs), short utterances and eventually short passages and/or dialogue for the purpose of helping students to get the 'gist' of what's being said.

   For more advanced students, the focus will be on the functional words of the language, words which are often unstressed and therefore often not heard. These would include prepositions, pronouns, reductions (e.g. bread and butter vs. bread'n butter, going to vs. "gonna," would have vs. "woulda" etc.), contractions, and blends. In addition, students need practice in hearing and understanding inflections: endings placed on the end of words which change meaning. Some common inflections include: 's' for 3rd person singular, present tense, possession and plural (and the three different sounds of 's': loves (z); Pete's(s); dishes(es); the -er/-est for comparative and superlative of adjectives; the three sounds of the regular past tense endings loved(d); stopped(t); and voted(id); etc.

2. SPEAKING - At least as important as developing listening skills, is helping students to develop oral skills. Here, controlled and free activities should be employed. Controlled activities are those in which a student is practicing a structure or a function of the language in a situation controlled by the activity at hand--activity from a book, situations set up by rods, pictures with cue words, a CLL situation, etc.

   Free activities include situations where students are free to talk about anything they want, or who are encouraged to use newly learned structures in original or creative ways.

Two corallaries to oral skills are error correction and pronunciation.

Error Correction - Researchers tend to disagree as to the efficacy of correction. Some go so far as to say that error correction is probably useless. However, a wise and judicious use of correction is probably the safe route. Correct student speech (or better, have others correct it) when either (a) the error is of the kind that completely breaks down communication or (b) when the error is of the kind that involves a misuse of the structure in focus in a particular lesson. Trying to correct every error, even every major error, may result in breaking down a student's willingness to speak at all until he's sure that everything he wishes to say is perfect.

Pronunciation - A second corallary of speaking activities is pronunciation practice. The native speaker tends to be more tolerant of grammatical errors than he is of pronunciation problems. The second language learner whose pronunciation renders his speech--even his accurate speech--unintelligible, is less apt to maintain the attention of the native speaker than the speaker whose pronunciation is acceptable but whose grammar is lacking. The teacher should consult resource books and materials for ways of developing pronunciation exercises for students, working with the whole group when the problem is global, and allowing students to work individually or in pairs when the problem is student-specific.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

Trainees should be made to understand the need for student dominated classroom especially where oral skills are concerned. The large percentage of talk in a classroom should be student talk--students to the teacher and students with each other. Carefully planned activities will facilitate this.

Trainees should also be make to understand that the content of oral skills, that is, the language being used in the activities should be relevant, meaningful language, language which is consistent with the language students need to be familiar with outside the classroom. Even if the focus is on a grammatical structure, the language used to practice the structure should be contextualized in a meaningful situation or setting.

Further, trainees should be shown some specific ways of creating activities or adapting activities from textbooks. Trainees should, finally be shown how and when to deal with errors and how to create activities to work on pronunciation problems. Often while the students are working, the teacher can be floating around and listening for some common pronunciation problems.

3. WRITING - Most adult learners of ESL do not consider the development of writing skills as important as the development of listening and speaking. Nevertheless, the teacher should attempt to introduce some written work, either controlled or free into each lesson, and on occasion, devote a major segment of a lesson to writing. At the early stages, students should be involved in writing in areas where they have just practiced. Also, at the earlier stages, controlled writing should be done. As students progress to the more advanced levels, freer writing exercises should be introduced. In any event, writing should not be postponed, but should be developed simultaneously with the other skill areas.

   Teachers should be careful here with students who may be illiterate in their own language and with students, especially beginning students, whose alphabet may not be the roman alphabet and who would therefore have singular difficulties with concepts as seemingly simple as letter formation and writing from left to right. Since writing is a personal activity, it should be individualized to meet the needs of the various students at various levels of writing proficiency.

4. READING - Here too, students' native literacy should serve as a gauge of teacher expectations. The teacher must be careful not to require students to perform a reading exercise aloud and in public before he is sure what that student's reading proficiency level is.

   For beginning students, reading is a "gross" process, that is, their need is at the translation level: identifying words and group of words and making meaning out of them. At the higher levels, students may need work with identifying more subtle meaning from a written passage, and should have practice in spotting and working with syntatic clues in the text (e.g. parenthetical information, complex pronoun references, etc.) At both levels, reading should be an individual process. Graded readers and other kinds of appropriate reading materials should be in abundant supply. Recent research seems to show that reading can be an incredibly rich source of language input, and students should be encouraged to read as much English as possible in and out of class.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

Writing and reading are essentially personal and private activities and since proficiency levels in the areas are apt to differ much more widely than in speaking and listening, students should be able to work in these areas at their own pace. Trainees should be made aware of the large variety of published reading materials that are available. In addition, trainees should be on the lookout for non-published materials that might be suitable for use in class (e.g. newspaper articles, magazines, etc.), as well as materials which might be particularly useful for students

who have particular language learning goals. In any event, materials (published or nonpublished) should be interesting to the students who use them, (if you're not sure, ask them!) and they should not be so difficult that students spend more time in a dictionary than on the material itself.

Finally, while reading and writing are usually a byproduct of most every lesson, trainees should be made aware of the need to occasionally allow more time for students to work on these two skill areas--perhaps devoting large segments of class time now and then. Controlled writing exercises (e.g. 10 steps and 26 steps) are often good for students whose free writing ability is lacking. In addition, writing activities can be based on pictoral essays (with or without cue words), transcribing conversations; writing dialogues, etc. Students should be encouraged to bring to class what they would like to read and time should be made available for them to do so.

5. WHAT ABOUT GRAMMAR?

Inexperienced ESL teachers sometimes tend to approach the teaching of English to the foreign born in the same way English is taught to native English speakers. Thus one is apt to hear them explaining to their students that a noun is the name of a person, place or thing; that adverbs answer the questions when, where, why and how; that nouns and pronouns following the verb to be are in the nominative case, etc. While one might question the efficacy of this kind of analysis even with native speakers, we know that this is particularly inappropriate for ESL students.

To understand the role of grammar in ESL teaching and learning, one might create the analogy of an auto mechanic and a driver where the mechanic is the ESL teacher and the driver is the ESL student.

Most drivers don't know and don't care about all that goes on inside and under a car to make it go. They're only interested in the fact that it goes when they want it to and in the direction they steer it. However, when something breaks down, the mechanic needs to understand the inner workings of the whole system and how the various parts of the system interact so that he can isolate problems, diagnose them, and correct them.

So too the ESL teacher needs to understand the inner workings of English so that when he detects a problem he can not only see that a problem exists but also the probable cause and a possible solution.

And just like the mechanic who need not explain the inner workings of the faulty system to the driver, so too the ESL teacher does not have to explain the grammatical why's and wherefore's to the student. Thus it is necessary that the teacher have a pretty good understanding of the system so that he can be prepared to diagnose and correct (or at least attempt to correct) errors when they occur.

And the inner workings of the system are complicated because most of us have never viewed the system through the eyes of the learner before. Most of us take for granted that it is correct to be on a street but in a city and at an address. We all know that it's "taller" but "more beautiful," and we've probably never really thought about the rule that governs the use of -er/-est in the comparative and superlative of adjectives in English. Or what about the statement "If I had the time, I'd help you." This is obviously a present time statement. Then why do we say 'had' instead of 'have' and what does "would" mean? When do we use the word "any?" Is the "there" in "There are 50 states in the United States" the same as the "there" in Joe's over there." These and hundreds of other parts make up the inner workings of English--and the ESL mechanic needs to have a good understanding of the system.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

Teachers inexperienced in English need to be made aware of the fact that the system needs to be viewed differently from the way they viewed English as native speakers studying English themselves. It's impossible to understand the system in a short period of time; usually, an understanding comes about over the long term time, and we're usually prodded best to improve our understanding when students ask a teacher something and he (the teacher) simply doesn't know the answer, (e.g. why do we say a couch but not a furniture).

Training should at least help to sensitize the beginning teacher to the fact that there is a system and should encourage him to go about the task of trying to understand it for himself. One of the best ways is by personally experiencing it: working through an ESL grammar book on his own.

Certainly the trainee should be advised that before he tackels an activity designed to teach a grammatical structure, he should fully understand how that structure works in the language. Further, the trainee should understand that we should teach students the language we speak, not the language a grammar book says we should speak. eg it doesn't make sense to spend hours teaching students to understand and use who and whom appropriately (Whom did you vote for) when almost no one makes this distinction in everyday speech.

Finally, the trainee should be discouraged from taking up a lot of the students' time explaining rules. Grammar structures are almost always better taught by examples of how they work in the language, not by the rules that govern them. After all, students, like most drivers, simply want to get where they're going.

SECTION II

SUGGESTIONS FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING

1. GROUP WORK

RATIONALE FOR GROUPING

Allowing students to work in small groups is a big step in creating a student-centered classroom. Small group work is useful for at least four reasons:

1. Students have the opportunity to practice structures and vocabulary with more freedom to experiment, question, and discover their own mistakes without the interference of the teacher.

2. Students interacting in a task develop a learning community, and learn to help and listen to each other.

3. Corrections are often less threatening from peers, and students give explanations to each other.

4. Small groups free the teacher to work with students with problems or those progressing rapidly. It also allows the teacher to group students according to their particular needs, or levels (multi-level class).

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND DEVELOPING A SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

1. The activity should have a clear structural and content focus. As you plan, make sure the teaching point of the activity is clear and remains central to the task. Sometimes in the process of incorporating imaginative ideas or audio-visual aids, the primary purpose of the task can be obscured!

2. Make simple materials which don't involve long planning and preparation time.

3. Plan materials that are simple for the students to use and will not involve long, complicated directions. Also, prepare clear directions. Describe exactly what the students are to do, giving examples or demonstrations where necessary.

4. Establish a repetoire of three or four kinds of activities which students can become accustomed to working with. (practicing different skills)

5. Plan the activity so that there is built-in encouragement to work together. The structure of the activity itself should be such that the students have to interact in order to accomplish the set task.

6. Try to allow flexibility in some activities for different learning styles and abilities. (e.g., Students might be offered a choice of listening to a story on tape without seeing it or with a printed version).

7. If the teacher is not going to be available or is not "floating," provide some sort of an answer or check sheet.

8. Make durable materials and organize and file your work.

9. Always have a table with "extra work" materials for groups who finish early.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

Discussion in training should help trainees to an understanding of the rationale for grouping and the basic procedures for writing or developing small group activities. Training should probably include a demonstration of a variety of activities as well as an opportunity for trainees to create and share some of their own based on the guidelines shown above, with trainees or groups of trainees each focusing on a different skill area (listening, speaking, writing, and reading).

2. ISSUES IN ERROR CORRECTION

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Contrastive Analysis (CA) was an approach to errors which assumed that errors which students made in learning a new language were, for the most part, attributable to negative transfer from the native language to the target language. It was believed by the proponents of CA that if one were to do a systematic analysis of the learner's native language *viz a viz* the target language, he could identify the differences and similarities between the two, and thereby predict—based on the differences—what problems students would make as a result of trying to infer rules of their native language on the target language (the language being studied). Thus, for example in contrasting Spanish with English, one might conclude that at the phonological level, learners would have difficulty with the English vowel system since there are only 5 vowels in Spanish as opposed to 12 in English. At the morphological level, Spanish speakers would be expected to have difficulty, for example, with the formation of the comparative in English. Spanish speakers form the comparative with *mas* + adjective. In English we use a similar structure with adjectives of more than one syllable (more intelligent), but for monosyllabic adjectives, we add - *er* to the adjective (taller).

Finally, we could predict certain syntactical errors. One clear example would be in the word order rules governing the placement of adjectives. In Spanish, adjectives follow the noun they modify where in English, adjectives preceed the noun.

One major problem of relying solely on CA to predict errors was that it assumed that such an analysis could predict and account for nearly all possible errors. However, more recent research has shown that CA does not account for *all* errors. In fact, many errors which students make are attritubable not to negative interference of the native language but to aspects of the target language itself. Indeed, studies have shown that learners from a variety of native languages make very similar mistakes in learning English.

ERROR ANALYSIS

As a result of these studies, emphasis shifted away from CA as the only approach to student error in favor of a more global view of errors—a view which examined all possible sources of errors, not just those resulting from negative transfer from the native language.

Error Analysis identified two main sources of error, *interlingual transfer* and *intralingual transfer*. *Interlingual* transfer, as we have already seen, involves those errors which result from negative transfer of the phonological, morphological and syntaxical rules of the native language to the target language. Errors of this type are usually found at the early stages of language learning when students don't have enough criteria about the target language and rely on what they do know (their native language), infering the rules of the native language on the target language. *Intra*lingual

transfer, on the other hand, involves those errors which result from the learners' incorrect application of the rules of the target language itself. Negative intralingual transfer is usually the result of a student's overgeneralizing a rule. (e.g. applying the rule for the creation past tense of regular verbs in English (+ed) to all past tenses thus go becomes goed instead of went.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

While this is a rather gross oversimplification of the principles of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis, we can arrive at some implications for training.

1. Errors no matter what their source, should not be seen by the teacher as so many flies at a picnic each of which need to be compulsively swatted at. Over-correction of errors will result in students who refuse to speak at all--or at least who refuse to speak until they are sure that what they want to say is perfectly correct.

2. On the other hand, the teacher should not totally disregard error correction since such disregard is positive feedback; it tells the student that he is speaking accurately when he's not, and it may lead to student's acquiring errors.

3. Errors should be seen by the perceptive teacher as necessary steps to language acquisition. They should not be the teacher's entire focus at the risk of his not hearing correct structures as well.

4. While some errors will be interlingual many will be intralingual and errors common to the group should be the focus for future lessons. Errors, on the other hand that are specific to particular students should be dealt with by working with that student in class and/or with material (exercises) to help that particular student outside of class.

5. Students are aware that their English isn't perfect; they wouldn't be in class otherwise. They expect to be corrected but the correction should be made in a way that the student isn't belittled or insulted.

6. Finally, it should be remembered that the goal of the ESL class is not a negative one: the reduction of error; it is a positive one: the enhancement of one's ability to communicate fluently.

3. INTRODUCTION TO THE STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH

The structure, or grammar, of English can be viewed from three levels. The lowest level is phonology, the study of the sounds of the language. The next level of structure is morphology, the study of the words of the language and their meaningful parts. The highest level of structure is syntax, how the words string together into meaningful units (phrases, clauses and sentences). For the purpose of ESL training, only the lowest level, phonology, will be looked at here.

Phonology is the study of the sound system of a language, and individual speech sounds which make a difference in meaning are called phonemes. The words pan and ban are identical in all respects save one:

> The initial phoneme in each word (/p/ vs. /b/) is different and thus a difference in meaning. In this case, the difference is a consonant difference. In the case of read and rid the phonemic difference is a difference in vowel sounds (/i/ vs. /I/).
>
> In each of these examples, we say the difference is a phonemic one since the meaning was affected by one sound. When one and only one sound is the cause for a change in meaning, we call the two words a minimal pair. Other examples of minimal pairs are:

BAT	BET
SHOE	CHEW
BUT	PUTT
THY	THIGH

Phonemes are generally written according to a universally accepted code where one symbol is assigned to one sound yielding a one-to-one correspondence at all times. (One major problem with English is that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between sounds and symbols. Consider the many different sounds the letter "o" has in English: bottle, ought, come, soda, do, cotton.) This code is known as the Intonation Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and convention has it that phonemes are always written between slashes as are words written in phonemic transcription. Thus, the words shown above as examples of minimal pairs would be written phonemically like this:

/bæt/ /bɛt/

/ŝʊ/ /ĉʊ/

/bʌt/ /pʊt/

/ðəi/ /θəi/

Vowels & Consonants

In English, there are 12 vowel phonemes and 26 consonant phonemes. A vowel is an oral sound characterized by the free flow of air through the oral cavity. An oral sound is a sound which is created when the air, passing through the vocal cords, causes them to vibrate. Vowel sounds are generally described in terms of where they are made in the mouth: front, back, or central.

Unlike vowels which are characterized by the free flow of air, consonants are produced by stopping or obstructing this flow of air (except for three nasal sounds). The obstruction of the flow of air through the mouth comes about when one part of the oral cavity comes in contact with another (e.g. to form the /p/ sound in English, the two lips come together then suddenly open.) Consonants cannot be pronounced in isolation, they must always be a result of the obstruction of the flow of air. (i.e. a vowel.) Thus, we can define consonants as interruptions of vowels. Consonant phonemes are described in terms of where they occur in the mouth and also in terms of whether they are voiced or voiceless.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

While it is probably not beneficial or even desirable to discuss any of these concepts with the ESL student, it is important for the ESL teacher to understand at least where in the mouth different sounds are made so as to keep students articulate these sounds correctly. It may also be helpful for teachers to be familiar with the Intonation Phonetic Alphabet. A particularly good reference is the Manual of American English Pronunciation (3rd edition) by Prator & Robinette.

Using minimal pairs, a teacher can help students develop a sensitivity to hearing sounds in English, especially sounds which do not exist in their native language. These same kinds of activities can help students in their production of English sounds.

Two other areas of the sound system on which teachers should help students to focus are stress and intonation.

STRESS - There are two kinds of stress: word stress and sentence stress. Word stress focuses on the syllable of the word which receives the stress. E.G. intimate, inappropriate, succeed. Sentence stress focuses on the words (or parts of words) which receive stress in the sentence. E.G. Their home was put up for sale at once. Generally speaking, function words receive stress in a sentence; content words do not. However, there are exceptions to this rule particularly when the speaker wants to change the emphasis of his statement.

INTONATION - Intonation refers to the melody of the language, the up's and down's in the flow of the language. Though it is more complicated than this, we may for our purposes describe two types of intonation, falling and rising.

Falling Intonation - is used most often for statement of fact, commands, and questions which begin with wh- words (also referred to as information questions). Note the intonation in these sentences:

He's late again.
Give it to me.
Where do you live?

Rising Intonation - is used mostly for yes/no questions in the following examples:

Do you have the time?
Is it soup yet?

As in stress, intonation patterns are not always so predictable and there are a variety of sub-groups to the two shown above. However, the scope of possibilities is beyond the purpose of this manual and the needs of most ESL classes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

Stress and intonation are important elements in language instruction not only because they are both carriers of meaning (e.g. addict vs. addict) but also because correct stress and intonation make the speaker's speech more native-like. The native speaker is much more tolerant of the foreigner's grammatical errors than he is of the foreigner's pronunciation (including stress and intonation) problems. Trainees should be made aware of the importance of these aspects of the language and assisted in learning to create appropriate activities to help students progress in these areas.

SECTION III

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENRICHMENT TRAINING

1. CURRENT ESL METHODOLOGIES AND THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES

Over the past fifty years or so, behaviorist psychology, cognitivist psychology and humanist psychology have each made major contributions to the field of education in offering teachers perspectives from which to analyze the phenonemon of human learning. More specifically, each has had a particular impact on the development of language teaching methodologies, and successful teachers have been those who have adopted and/or modified methods and techniques based on the assumptions they have made about how teaching and learning best occur in the classroom.

BEHAVIORISM

Most everyone is familiar with the classical conditioning experiments of Ivan Pavlov; his work with dogs and tuning forks is now legendary. Dogs salivate when food is present. This is a natural, involuntary, biological reaction. Pavlov, by sounding a tuning fork whenever food was presented to dogs was eventually able to condition dogs to salivate at the sound of the fork alone. Thus he taught dogs to respond to stimulus which he had substituted for the original one. He learned too that this new behavior would extinguish if food wasn't eventually presented (positive reinforcement).

B. F. Skinner applied this model to human learning, but found that with humans, it wasn't always possible to isolate and accurately identify the stimulus which invoked a particular response. He therefore shifted his emphasis away from the stimulus and dealt with the response itself. His conclusion was that if we want desired learning to take place, it is necessary to set up situations in which the appropriate response would be likely to be elicited. If we have been successful in designing the situation and succeed in obtaining the desired response, then the response should be immediately positively reinforced. He hypothesized that given enough occurrances of this sequence (desired response→positive reinforcement) the desired response would eventually become fixed in the form of a habit. Thus for Skinner, learning was seen as a rather mechanical process of habit formation.

COGNITIVISM

Behaviorism, more specifically Skinner's approach to learning, had a sweeping effect on educators including language teachers. However, it eventually came to be questioned by other learning psychologists who tended not to view the learner as a force which had to be acted upon and who did not agree that learning was a mechanical process. Rather, they viewed the learner as a

thinking human person who brought to the learning situation a wealth of experience and previous learning. While the cognitivists agreed with Skinner that we could not understand what it was within an individual that caused him to behave in one way or another, they disagreed with the notion that we should disregard what we couldn't objectively analyze or understand. Instead of viewing learning as a mechanical process of habit formation, they saw it rather as a continual building process in which new information had to be relevant to something the learner already knew and could make sense of before he (the learner) accepted it. Further, and perhaps most significantly, they saw the learner as the active agent in the learning process. They believed that the learner was ultimately responsible for his own learning and that the role of the teacher in this process was that of a facilitator--one who serves as an observer, a guide in the process whose task is essentially to help the learner discover for himself the things he must do to learn what it is he wishes to learn.

HUMANISM

Working off the cognitivists, humanist psychologists also believed that the learner was central to the learning process, but they went a bit further. Humanist psychologists believed that the classroom often tended to ignore the "whole person," by failing to consider that a learner brings to class not only his intellect but his emotions, instincts, somatic reactions and volition as well. They believed that all of these aspects of the learner—the whole learner—must be engaged or at least accounted for if learning is to take place. Thus, the humanist psychologists added to the responsibilities of the teacher the task of striving to create an environment which responded to the needs not only of the intellect but of all these other areas as well.

APPLICATIONS TO LANGUAGE LEARNING METHODOLOGY

Each of these schools of learning psychology contributed in positive ways to the development of a variety of language learning methodologies. Perhaps the most representative of each school are Audio Lingual, Silent Way, and Community Language Learning.

The Audio Lingual Method, AL, evolved as a result of views espoused by behavioral psychologists. It was characterized by a teacher dominated classroom. The role of the teacher was to introduce structures to be learned usually in an initial dialogue. Students memorized the dialogues (often, at the early stages of learning at least, without understanding). This was followed by lots of mechanical repitition of patterened exercises which students repeated chorally in groups, then individually. Emphasis was placed first on speaking and listening. Writing and reading were usually delayed until later in the learning process. Errors were seen as a breakdown in the process and efforts were made to avoid them at all costs. When they did occur, the process was repeated in an attempt to rid them. Correct utterances were positively reinforced. The whole point was to develop correct habits in the students, and all techniques were geared to this purpose.

The Silent Way, SW, is the best known (though there are many others) method characteristic of cognitive code learning. In SW, the role of the teacher and learner are the reverse of their roles in AL. Here teaching is subordinate to learning. The class is student centered in that the students from the very beginning are given the responsibility for their own learning. The language is the students' responsibility; how the students are handling their responsibility is the concern of the teacher. Like AL, the teacher controls the pace of the learning initially by introducing structures to be learned, but soon on, as the students begin to actively engage themselves in the process, and the teacher takes his cues from the learners by focusing on where they are having problems and dealing with these. In this sense, the teacher is focused on individual students and is able to do this because he is silent most of the time. The teacher's silence provides him with the opportunity to attend to how individual students are coping with their own learning tasks.

Errors in SW are not things to be avoided; rather they are seen as gauges of where students are in their own learning. Since students are encouraged to make hypotheses about correctness and to test these hypotheses, errors (erroneous hypotheses) are expected and welcomed.

Vocabulary is very limited in the early stages; the word for rod (one of ten wooden cubes of varying sizes and colors) and a handful of verbs are, initially, the only content words introduced. The reaminder of vocabulary used in the beginning stages are function words. this is so because SW sees as primary that students learn to develop their own "inner criteria" for correctness both as to the syntax of the language and the melody of the language. SW proposes that once these criteria are developed, students will easily be able to expand their vocabulary with the content vocabulary of the language.

COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING (CLL)- Community Language Learning is a model offered by those who see the need for addressing the "whole person" in education. Proponents of this model see the learner as one who inherently considers new learning as a threat to his ego. CLL teachers, therefore, strive to construct a community in the ESL classroom in which the student can feel secure—secure that his ego will not be threatened. CLL teachers believe that before learning can take place, a student must be willing to invest himself in the learning process. This self-investment (analagous to a financial investment) involves risk; the deeper the investment, the greater the risk. And just as a financial investment may produce either a positive or a negative yield, so too does investing in language learning produce a positive or negative yield, though here yield is seen as acceptance or rejection of the investor, either of the teacher or the other students. Thus the need for security. Since the quality and quantity of learning is directly proportionate to the depth and intensity of the investment, the student must feel secure that his investment would net a positive yield.

In CLL, the teacher is seen as equal to the student except in one respect: the teacher (knower) knows something that the learner wants to know. The teacher avails himself to the student, and accepts any strategy the learner wishes to use to arrive at that knowledge.

SUMMARY

While the trend in the profession in the last ten years or so has been away from the behaviorist assumptions about learning, and therefore away from AL, the fact is that none of these methods has been able to claim that it has found the answer to successful language learning, and trainees should be assured that because they are not trained SW or CLL teachers they are inferior or even inadequate teachers. It may be that the answer to successful language learning in the classroom setting is not to be found in one method or another, or even in method at all, but rather in the way we as teachers interact with our students and work to provide them with the kinds of learning experiences which respond to their needs and, of course, their abilities in an environment that is stimulating, challenging, student centered and most importantly, secure.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

1. It is helpful for trainees to be aware of the existence of these three methodologies and the particular assumptions about teaching and learning each makes. However, it should not be the goal of training to try to teach any of the models since to do so without sufficient training and expertise would be to risk giving a false representation of the models and possibly distorting in the minds of the trainee the validity of what are three very valid teaching methods.

2. Training should be focused on ways in which we can use some of the assumptions of each of the methods to improve our own techniques, activities, materials and general rationale for doing what we do in the classroom.

3. Trainees should be encouraged to seek out additional training and should be referred to the appropriate sources for such training if they wish it.

2. FUNCTIONS AND NOTIONS

I. Introduction: What are functions & notions?

Basically, FUNCTIONS are things we use the language for. Whenever we communicate to someone else (whether to another individual or to a group), our communication carries with it a specific function. We use language, for example, to pursuade; to introduce; to con; to apologize; to make, accept or decline propositions, proposals or invitations; to seduce; to express sympathy, concern, gratitude, affection; etc., etc, etc. All of these are functions. NOTIONS are ideas, concepts or tangible realities which we talk about when we use language. Examples of NOTIONS are: space, distance, time, size, shape. NOTIONS also include things like color, body parts, foods, transportation, medicine, etc., etc.

II. What is a functional-notional approach?

People who advocate the use of the FN approach are quick to point out that it is just that, an approach, not a method. FN concerns itself with what is taught, not how it is taught. Its concern is with how people really communicate with each other. Thus a FN approach might be defined as an approach to language teaching and learning which removes the grammatical structures as the focus and purpose of a lesson (or curriculum) and replaces it with functions and notions on the assumptions that such a shift in emphasis will better equip the learner to use language appropriately and strategically by learning how to use the language to accomplish a specific, functional goal.

III. What's wrong with teaching grammatical structures in a situational context?

Advocates of FN would argue that no matter how creative a situation is in which to contextualize a grammatical structure, the student's attention is, nevertheless, on the structure and not on the situation. "While a situational approach to a structural syllabus (or lesson) is possible," they say, "sometimes the very fact that situations are devised to illustrate grammar, instead of grammar illustrating a function or notion, keys the student artifically into grammatical categories that later impede the communicative process." Language is not necessarily acquired in such a lock-step fashion (to be, then present, then past, then future, etc.), and students are hard pressed to use the language at all realistically (communicatively) if they have to wait until week #7 to learn the structure they need to express a function or notion they have the need to express.

IV. How can students understand a functional lesson if they don't understand the structures of the lesson?

Good Question! Here's where the teacher has to be a bit careful not to overwhelm the learner. One possibility would be to keep

in mind what Krashen has to say about comprehensible input. Krashen suggests that the language used in the classroom to enhance acquisition be at or just beyond the students current linguistic or cognitive level of proficiency, and that too, it be meaningful, interesting and relevant. So meaningful, so interesting and so relevant, that the student almost forgets that he is working in a second language. Given such language in an equally relevant context, students often will be able to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar structures. That isn't to say that it won't ever be necessary for teachers to explain such structures, but the explanations will be the result of the lesson, not the focus of it. Further, the explanations will best be made not by explaining rules, but by using the structures in a different context to help clarify it. Later, if he wishes, the teacher can devise exercises for students to practice the structure more thoroughly.

V. Does using a FN approach mean that teachers don't have to concern themselves with understanding the grammatical system of English?

Absolutely not! In fact the teacher's understanding of the grammatical system may be more important than ever since he won't be using a grammatically sequenced text to guide him.

VI. How carefully should the teacher "screen" FN materials for grammatical structures?

Structures should be screened and/or replaced with easier ones if they are obviously way beyond the students' linguistic proficiency. However, it is important <u>not</u> to use structures solely as criteria for creating a dialogue. Such a strategy only serves to render a dialogue (or other kinds of materials) artificial. As you will see later, FN advocates use of structures that are natural to a function even if such a structure might not normally occur "up front" in a structural syllabus. E.G. In teaching the function: <u>asking permission</u>, something like "Can I use the phone?" would be considered quite acceptable at a very early stage even though "can" often doesn't appear until well into a grammatically sequenced text.

VII. What's the procedure for planning FN lessons?

The question usually arises at this point, how do I know which functions and notions to teach, and of all the possibilities, which ones should I choose? The answer is to take a student-centered approach. What do your students do and what functions do they need? Some are basic to large groups of students; others may be more specific. Do a needs assessment and go from there.

Going from there looks something like this: 1) Decide on a function. 2) Think about some of the ways we have in the language to express that function. Of the ways, which are the

most common in everyday speech? (Some ways of expressing a function are more formal than others, some more polite, etc.)
3) Decide on the way(s) you think will be useful for your students to learn. The most common way(s) is the best for beginners; for more advanced students, you may wish to use more structurally sophisticated ways for expressing the same function: e.g. asking permission: can/may I.... vs. would you mind if.... The point to remember is this: if the expression is common, use it; don't worry about the linguistic form.
4) Create activities/dialogues/etc. for students to use to practice the function. Activities should include ample time for students to create their own situations with each other. Testing here would involve teacher circulating among pairs/groups and listening in for appropriate use of language to express functions. Teacher can use common problems as a means for review or further work.

VIII. Then what?

That's it, essentially. FN lessons tend to be cyclical, unlike structural lessons that tend to be linear. That is, the most common functions and notions are met again and again but each time, a more sophisticated means of expressing the functions and more challenging activities are employed.

IX. One last point.

In working with functions and notions, tone of voice and body language take on much greater significance than in conventional approaches. Also, social register becomes a matter of central concern as well. For example: let's say you're teaching the function: giving suggestions. The tone of voice used to suggest to a co-worker who is often tardy that he not be late any more is different from the tone an irate employer might use to make the same suggestion to the same employee. Also, in terms of register, the way one talks to a friend or someone on his own social level is quite different from the tone used to speak to someone in authority or someone to whom society tends to extend a high degree of deference or respect.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

1. Trainees need to be focused on the fundamental difference between a grammatical approach to ESL teaching and a FN approach and the reasons why proponents of FN advocate such a shift.

2. Trainees should be aware of the goals of FN and how these goals of are realized. This would, obviously, involve a discussion of functions and notions followed by activities with trainees to give them an opportunity to create their own FN materials.